

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 00560 270706Z
ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6239

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 0560

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TW

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CHOU SHU-KAI CONCERNING
TAIWAN INTERNAL SITUATION

REF: A. TAIPEI 7674 DEC 77; B. TAIPEI 0381

1. IN WHAT WAS PROBABLY OUR FINAL PRIVATE CONVERSATION, CHOU SHU-KAI THIS NOON CONFIRMED TO ME REASONS FOR HIS APPOINTMENT TO VATICAN AS EXPLAINED REF A. HE LEFT ME WITH IMPRESSION HOWEVER THAT THIS DECISION WAS TAKEN RATHER HASTILY AND MAY HAVE SINCE GIVEN RISE TO SOME REGRETS NOT ONLY ON HIS PART BUT ALSO PREMIER CHIANG'S. AMBASSADOR CHOU PROFESSED NOT TO KNOW WHO WILL TAKE UP HIS ROLE AS "MAJOR-DOMO" (HIS OWN DESCRIPTION) FOR PRIME MINISTER'S WEEKEND TRIPS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IN THAT ROLE HE HAS SERVED AS PERSONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR TO PREMIER, AS WE HAVE BEEN ASSUMING. HE IDENTIFIED HUANG SHAO-KU (SECRETARY GENERAL NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL) AS INDIVIDUAL WHO WILL PROVIDE PREMIER WITH CAREFUL, OBJECTIVE AND MODERATE ADVICE IN
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIELD ALTHOUGH HE CLEARLY WILL NOT BE AS ACTIVE IN THIS ROLE AS AMBASSADOR CHOU. THE LATTER URGED ME TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH HUANG AND REPEATED THIS ADVICE WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT ONE DAY WE WILL WANT TO BEGIN TO TALK TO GROU FULLY AND FRANKLY ABOUT NORMALIZATION AND HOW WE INTEND TO CARRY IT THROUGH. ALTHOUGH I REFERRED TO TIMING CONSIDERATIONS ALONG LINES SET OUT BY CHANG HSIAO-YEN (REF B) WITHOUT

NAMING CHANG, CHOU GAVE NO INDICATION HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH THIS FORMULA. HIS ONLY OBSERVATION ABOUT NORMALIZATION WAS TO EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE ANY DEVELOPMENTS ON THIS MATTER IN THE DIFFICULT PERIOD BETWEEN NOW AND JUNE WHEN TAIWAN WOULD BE IN THE THROES OF ELECTIONS AND THE APPOINTMENT AND INSTALLATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT.

2. I MENTIONED INDICATIONS WHICH HAVE REACHED US ABOUT THE PREMIER'S PREOCCUPATION ABOUT LAST NOVEMBER'S ELECTIONS AND INTERNAL POLITICS. AMBASSADOR CHOU ACKNOWLEDGED THIS BUT SAID THAT PREMIER HAS PUT HIS CONCERNS BEHIND HIM AND IS NOT DISTURBED ABOUT INTERNAL POLITICAL TRENDS. SPECIFICALLY CHOU SAID IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION THAT THE PREMIER HAS NO INTENTION OF "CLAMPING DOWN" AND IN FACT INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO PURSUE HIS POLICY OF ACCEPTING MORE OPEN POLITICAL ACTION AND EXPRESSION ON TAIWAN.

3. AS FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS, CHOU SHU-KAI SAID THAT THE PREMIER'S SELECTION OF A RUNNING MATE FOR VICE PRESIDENT WILL BE ACCEPTED BY THE KMT NOMINATING SESSION. CHOU HOWEVER REFLECTED SAME UNCERTAINTY MENTIONED IN OTHER QUARTERS ABOUT ACTION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ONCE THEY ARE IN SESSION. WHILE HE HAS NO DOUBT ABOUT ELECTION OF PARTY'S CHOICE AS VICE PRESIDENT, HE SAID PARTY LEADERSHIP IS DISTURBED AT POSSIBILITY THERE MAY BE SEVERAL OTHER CANDIDATES AND THAT KMT VOTE MIGHT BE DISPERSED AND PRODUCE

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WHAT FOR THE PARTY WOULD BE A BAD DEMONSTRATION OF INTERNAL DIVISIONS AND POOR DISCIPLINE. FOLLOWING ELECTION NEW PRESIDENT, THE NEW PREMIER AND HIS CABINET HAVE UNTIL MAY 20 TO BE NAMED AND THEN UNTIL MAY30 TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN. AMBASSADOR CHOU OBVIOUSLY SAW THIS ENTIRE PERIOD FROM EARLY FEBRUARY TO THE BEGINNING OF JUNE AS AN UNSTABLE, POSSIBLY TURBULENT PERIOD IN INTERNAL POLITICS HERE.

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